AM.
KOREA

THE

Touch of Christ

A TALE OF MISSIONS

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ANNUAL MEETING OF KOREA MISSION, 1898.

Dr. and Mrs. Hardie and children, Bishop Wilson, Rev. and Mrs. C. T. Collyer and son, Rev. and Mrs. C. F. Reid and family. Mrs. T. H. Yun is standing just behind Mrs. Reid.

THE TOUCH OF CHRIST.

A Tale of Missions

A SAD message borne across the Pacific announcing the death of the wife of the Hon. T. H. Yun, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Empire of Korea, calls vividly to mind one of the most remarkable examples of what the touch of Jesus Christ may mean to an Oriental woman that has fallen under the observation of the writer during a missionary experience of twenty-six years.

Truth is still stranger than fiction, and it would be difficult to find in the pages of our most thrilling novels a picture of life so replete with love, romance, adventure, and splendid achievement as is furnished by the unvarnished history of Mrs. Yun and her noble husband.

The story of these lives also reveals that in the hearts of a simple Chinese maid and a Korean lad exist all the possibilities of love and happiness, suffering, sacrifice, and consecration that can be found under the highest conditions of civilization and Christian culture. Indeed it would seem to be an open question if there be not an even keener susceptibility of the emotional nature and a larger capacity for

utter self-sacrifice among the Orientals than is commonly found in the more calculating Occidental.

In the very early days of our mission work in China, when there were large unoccupied spaces where now stands the great city of Shanghai, Mrs. J. W. Lambuth, while returning from a visit to a friend was attracted by the moaning cry of a child which seemed to proceed from a grave mound she was passing. Upon approaching she found that the sound came from a little Chinese girl that had evidently been abandoned by its heathen parents and left in the long grass to perish, an event that, from its condition, seemed very near at hand.

But that moan had reached a heart that was never known to close against such an appeal. What mattered it that the little half-clad form was burning with fever and the features swollen and distorted with the worst type of confluent smallpox? The mother instinct was large enough for all that, and with hot indignation against the cruelty of its natural protectors, she clasped the little sufferer to her bosom and hurried home.

Days of gentle ministry and nights of vigil were rewarded, and in a few weeks the little Mei-Long was able to smile back her gratitude into the eyes of her benefactress. Convalescence was followed by robust health, and Mei-Long became a happy inmate of the Lambuth home, and a jolly playmate of the Lambuth baby boy, Walter.

More fortunate in her abandonment than in her birth, she passed the years of child life and school life, and in her early womanhood was married to a young

Clopton School in the early days, when Mei-Long was the [illegible] Mrs. M. I. Lambuth's care and instruction.

Christian, trained in the London Mission, by the name of Mo. In spite of the telltale marks so thick that a pin could scarcely be put down on an unscarred portion of her face, Mei-Long grew into a very winsome girl, and is to-day a comely woman, and in the capacity of nurse and Bible woman at the Woman's Hospital at Soochow, paying back to the Mission and China's suffering womanhood the kindness she received in early life.

Several children blessed the happy married life of Mei-Long and her husband, one of whom was Sieu-Tsung (Mrs. T. H. Yun), whose recent death is responsible for this narrative.

It was but natural that Mrs. Mo should seek for her daughter the advantages of the school that had done so much for her, but the scanty income of her home made it necessary to appeal to her kind foster mother. The facts became known to the Sunday school at Marshall, Mo., probably through the great-hearted Palmore, who, if memory serves, was pastor of our Church in Marshall at that time (1879), and the Sunday school undertook the support of Sieu-Tsung and continued the good work until her marriage with Mr. Yun, some fourteen years later.

For nearly ten years Sieu-Tsung was under the pastoral oversight of the writer, and it was a pleasure to watch the development of as fine a Christian character as can be found anywhere. Born of Christian parents and reared in Clopton School, she was, of course, not subjected to the cruel torture of foot-binding, and hence to the beauty of her winsome face was added the grace of a perfect, untrammeled phys-

ical life. The innate modesty common to Chinese women, and especially observable in her, lent a charm to her manner and bearing that produced a most pleasing general effect.

While Sieu-Tsung was passing through the earlie years of a happy school life, stirring events were transpiring in the neighboring kingdom of Korea. An American naval officer had broken through the wall of exclusion which had kept this part of Eastern Asia secluded from the rest of the world for centuries and had made a treaty with the king, permitting Americans to reside among and trade with the people of Korea, and the United States Government had sent out Commodore Foote to be its first representative to reside in the capital city of Seoul. The coming of the men of the West in their great ships had aroused the curiosity of the more intelligent of the people.

This desire to know more of the outside was specially noticeable among the young nobility residing in Seoul. They became very friendly with Commodore Foote, gave themselves ardently to the study of English, and finally organized, under the leadership of Prince Min Yong-Ik, to promote intercourse with foreign nations. One of the first steps taken was to petition the king to establish a postal service, and though the older and conservative nobles were all opposed to the movement, the powerful influence of the queen carried the day in its favor. The night

before the edict was to be announced Prince Min's party was assembled in a banquet hall to celebrate by feasting the victory they had won.

Little did they suspect the ruin that hung over them. Seoul was at that time a great heathen capital, and a perfect hotbed of intrigue, plot, and counterplot. The enmity of the Conservative party had been fully aroused, and so it happened that while the bowl was circling freely and joy was at its highest, a band of hired assassins burst in, and there began a scene of bloody slaughter. This affair is known in history as the Postal Émute of 1884.

It is not germane with this narrative to dwell upon the deep and widespread influence of that night's work. It is enough for our purpose to state that one of the young noblemen assembled at the banquet escaped unhurt and fled to the American legation. His name was Yun Tchi-Ho, the present Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for Korea, and probably the most influential official in the empire, but who is better known at Vanderbilt, Emory College, and among a host of American friends as T. H. Yun.

Young Yun had been rather a favorite with the American Minister, and so when he came to the legation seeking protection the Commodore kindly and secretly had him conveyed to Chemulpo, the seaport, and on board an American man-of-war bound for Shanghai, China.

In due time the young man arrived at his destination. Owing to his rapid flight, he was in rather a dilapidated condition, but his friends had put a little bag of gold dust in his hand as he was making his

YUN TCHI-HO.

escape, so that he was soon able to repair damages. He at once entered our Anglo-Chinese College at Shanghai, where he remained an indefatigable student for six years, and where he was happily converted to Christianity. In 1890 he came to America and continued his studies at Vanderbilt and Emory College.

His transparent nature, brilliant wit, and fund of hearty good fellowship won hosts of friends for him wherever he went, and his wonderful power of adaptability enabled him to fit into whatsoever condition he found. He was born to be a leader of men. The writer has seen immense throngs of his own countrymen hang with eager interest on his words, and ready to follow him with implicit obedience to any issue he might choose to lead them.

If memory serves, it was in 1892 that Mr. Yun returned to Shanghai to take his place as a teacher in the Anglo-Chinese College. The writer was at that time pastor of Central Church and Trinity, Trinity being practically the chapel for Clopton School.

Sieu-Tsung had grown into a beautiful, accomplished woman, and was our organist. Mr. Yun worshiped at the college on the other side of the city until one day he happened to be at Trinity as a member of the Quarterly Conference, and a kind fortune brought the loveliness of Sieu-Tsung within the range of his vision. After that we had the pleasure of Mr. Yun's presence quite frequently. In fact, it was remarkable to note with what ease an excuse

was found for bringing him across the city, a distance of about three miles.

The custom of China is not favorable to courtship, but in the Orient, as in the Occident, true love laughs at locks. The impossible happened—a meeting was arranged with happy results, and in course of time it was announced that China and Korea were about to be joined in an alliance, offensive and defensive.

The wedding was unique in that it called for considerable concessions from both Oriental and Occidental customs. The old schoolmates of Sieu-Tsung and the lady guests were strictly confined to the dining room, and Mr. Yun and the gentlemen guests were confined to the parlor. The happy couple stood in the sliding doorway separating the two rooms, each on the side representing the sex to which they belonged. No sooner had the preacher pronounced the words, "Whom God hath joined let no man put asunder," than the sliding doors were promptly closed, and the high contracting parties were as surely divided as could be done by a pair of heavy doors. Was it ominous of the many and long separations that in after years threw a painful shadow across these lives that seemed to have been made for each other? The world loves a lover, and surely the friends of this happy couple rejoiced in a union that seemed in every way so fitting and so promising.

The honeymoon was scarce begun when from over the sea there came a message to Mr. Yun informing him that he was wanted at the court of Korea. He answered the summons, and it was not long before we learned that he had been appointed Vice Min-

ister of Education, and intrusted with the task of organizing an educational system for the kingdom.

We also heard good things of Sieu-Tsung. She had become a happy mother, was a favorite with the queen, and a frequent guest at the palace. We heard also with gladness that with all their honors she and her noble husband were standing true to Christ and all that makes for righteousness. We heard of their eager interest in Christian work and their hearty co-operation with the missionaries—teaching, preaching, and, above all, living beautiful, simple Christian lives before a wicked, profligate court—and we rejoiced that God had raised up a man in Korea to stand like Joseph in the court of Pharaoh, a witness of the power of God to transform a human heart and sanctify it to the higher uses of life.

Then there came a letter from Mr. Yun pleading that our own Southern Methodism might have a part in the work of regenerating that long-suffering people. In the good providence of God, it was so arranged, and in the fall of 1895 Bishop Hendrix and the writer sailed from Shanghai to investigate the need and opportunity, and, if finding indications favorable, to open work. Mr. Yun met us at Seoul with a glad welcome, and in every possible way facilitated our work. Every opportunity was given us to study the situation. Audience with the king, interviews with domestic and foreign officials, and the cordial co-operation of the missionaries were secured or facilitated through the influence and prestige of our "friend at court," and we were enabled to begin our

work in Korea under the most favorable circumstances.

The part Mr. and Mrs. Yun had in the opening and growth of our Korean mission was so important that it is difficult to resist the temptation to record in detail the story of our trials and triumphs. We must not, however, be drawn away from the purpose of this narrative, and shall make only such allusion to the general work as seems to reveal the character and lives of our friends.

In 1895 troublous times were brewing for them. The Chino-Japanese war had terminated with the nominal independence of Korea as one of its important results. The government, however, was very weak. The diplomatic agents of Japan and Russia were very active at court, each eager to gain a dominating influence. Internal disorders added to the difficulty of the situation. Brigandage and plunder were rife throughout the land. No one was safe, and everything was so unsettled that what the morrow would bring forth was beyond the skill of the keenest observer to predict with any degree of certainty.

The good queen was by far the ablest diplomat at court, and, while living, was the acknowledged leader of the small party of true patriots who were for neither Japan nor Russia, but stood for the integrity and full independence of Korea. By her masterful skill and tact she was able to ferret out and baffle all the plots of her enemies, and to maintain the dignity and supremacy of the government.

But, alas! In the early part of October, 1895, she was foully murdered in her own private apartments.

The devoted band of patriots were without a leader, and for the time being Korea fell into the hands of her enemies. The regicides usurped control of the government, and held the king practically a prisoner in his own palace. At this time the position of Mr. Yun became very precarious, and it was rendered much more so in November by an abortive attempt made by his father to overthrow the conspirators and restore the king to his authority. His extreme popularity with the representatives of foreign powers residing in Seoul, and of whom the usurpers stood justly in awe, was a great protection. He was, however, in the way, and so when the government arranged to send an embassy to the coronation of the Czar of Russia, he was appointed first secretary of the embassy, and thus his influence was for the time removed from the affairs of the court. Then began a season of separation, anxiety, and sorrow for Mrs. Yun that dragged through many a weary month, and from the effects of which she probably never fully recovered. It was not thought wise or safe to leave her in Korea during her husband's protracted absence, and so she and her children were sent to Shanghai, where among her old friends she might find the comfort and protection she could not hope to have in Korea. She well knew the conditions about her husband were exceedingly dangerous, and, though in the midst of those who loved her, there came a sadness on her life and a wistful look in her beautiful eyes that made her friends feel very tender toward her.

The mission was truly a very unfortunate one for Mr. Yun. The pro-Russian tendencies and conces-

sions of his chief were so offensive to Mr. Yun that in Moscow the relation became so strained as to be unendurable, and he abandoned the embassy and returned to Paris. The results of this act were far-reaching. To abandon a mission upon which he had been sent by his king was to commit a political offense for which he might be called to answer with his life.

It was necessary for him to remain in Paris until some assurance could be obtained that the way was open for him to return home. Fortunately affairs had not been at a standstill in his native land. In the spring of 1896 the king had escaped from his persecutors, and fled to the Russian Legation. He immediately organized a new cabinet, and the regicide cabinet was destroyed or scattered. Mr. Yun's father was recalled from China and appointed the leader of an important department, and influences were employed that made it possible for Mr. Yun to return. He came quietly and alone, for it was still considered unsafe for his family, and, for that matter, a change in the cabinet was likely to occur at any time that would place him in great peril. He came to our mission home, interested himself in our mission work, acted as our interpreter, and finally filled our pulpit every Sunday morning, and in many ways lent his quiet but powerful influence to the extension and upbuilding of our work. But the fire of true patriotism and the spirit of a leader burned within him. The corruption of a self-seeking court and the oppression of the people chafed and angered him. It was not possible for him to remain long in Korea and with-

hold his hand from the efforts that were being made to bring about a better state of things.

A young Korean nobleman, who had fled to America and there received a liberal education, and had been admitted to American citizenship under the name of Dr. Phillip Jaison, had returned to Korea with an American bride, under contract with the government to act as adviser to the king. In pursuing his plan to educate the people and reform the government, Dr. Jaison had established a triweekly newspaper which he named *The Independent.* He had also organized the young noblemen and students in Seoul under the name of "The Independence Club."

Of course Mr. Yun at once became a prominent member of this club, and before long a regular contributor to *The Independent,* under the *nom de plume* of "Arriso" (one who knows). His articles chiefly dealt with his experience in Russia and *en route* to and from, and attracted wide attention. The paper and club rapidly acquired influence, and soon became a powerful factor in the affairs of the government. Corruption and official crimes of all kinds were fearlessly exposed, and the perpetrators held up to the scorn of the people. It was not to be expected that a crusade of this kind could long be carried on without arousing bitter enmity.

The old Conservative officials who had grown fat on plunder and the men who were secretly aiding and abetting the designs of diplomatic agents could ill brook to have their deeds dragged into public view, and they put their heads and hands together to abate and finally to destroy the new forces that were so

persistently arraigned against them. Little by little Dr. Jaison found his efficiency curtailed in his official relation, until at last his office of adviser to the king became a mere name. He was then made to understand that his presence in the country would no longer be tolerated. The full price of his contract was handed him, his home handsomely paid for, and he returned to America.

Mr. Yun immediately stepped into his place as editor of *The Independent* and leader of the Independence Club, and if anything the war on official corruption and oppression was waged with even more vigor than it had been under the leadership of Dr. Jaison.

In the meantime Sieu-Tsung had rejoined her husband and they had built for themselves a sweet home just outside the great city wall. These were happy days for Sieu-Tsung. Both she and her husband were exceedingly popular at the American and British Legations, and their presence was eagerly sought at all the legation functions and popular gatherings of foreigners. To one who had known her from a child it was a real pleasure to watch the simple grace and dignity with which she bore herself.

The writer remembers being at one of the legation functions, quietly noting the ease with which Sieu-Tsung was conducting a conversation with a member of the diplomatic body when the wife of the American Minister turned to him and said: "Isn't Mrs. Yun charming to-night? She certainly is the peer of any lady in this city of Seoul." It was no less pleasing to observe her when she had laid aside her

silken robes and in simple dress and with sweet earnestness talked to her Sunday school class or in the homes of the lowly Koreans about the Heavenly Father and the love of Christ. No honor conferred upon her, no change of station or fortune ever caused her to waver in her allegiance to her Lord or made her lose the unconscious simplicity and grace of her manner.

Events were to transpire that would prove that her character was not wanting in the sterner elements of a strong life. Around Mr. Yun storms were gathering soon to burst in sudden fury and destroy the short-lived happiness of the new home. A deep-laid plot was formed involving him and nineteen other prominent men of the Independence Club. Old political crimes were to be brought against them; they were to be arrested, and after a hurried form of official examination they were to be as hurriedly executed. So well was the plot laid and so carefully the secret guarded that not until late in the night did a friend learn from a member of one of the guards that the arrests were to be made at daybreak. This friend was in the city, and when he tried to obtain egress found all the gates closely guarded. So much time was consumed in finding a place where he could clamber over the wall that he only reached Mr. Yun's outer gate just as the arresting party came up. He was immediately seized, but managed to make such an outcry that Sieu-Tsung was awakened. She at once aroused her husband, who began dressing. By this time the soldiers had effected an entrance into the compound, and were demanding admittance into

Residence of Rev. C. F. Reid, in which Mr. Yun took refuge.

the house. Sieu-Tsung went to the door and held them in parlance until her husband had completed dressing and effected an escape over the rear wall of the compound.

It was characteristic of Mr. Yun that, instead of flying to Chemulpo, where he could easily have escaped on board ship, he went to a chair stand, hired a woman's closed chair, and had himself carried right through the guards stationed at the gates into the city.

The writer was early informed of what had transpired, and started out to see what could be done, and in a short time Mr. Yun was found at the house of a friend, quite calm but decidedly alive to the extreme danger of the situation. He was advised to repair at once to our mission compound, which he did, and was shown into a small inside room opening off the study. Again the writer started out to consult with one in high authority as to what further steps could be taken for his protection. The reply was: "Keep Mr. Yun where he is. The soldiers will not find his hiding place for several days, and no one can tell what will happen during the next forty-eight hours in Korea."

On our return we found Mr. Yun seated at a table, his pen flying over the paper in preparation of his editorial for the issue of *The Independent* of the next morning. The office, being American property, on American-owned ground, was safe from intrusion. Sure enough, the paper came out the following morning on time, and spicy as usual.

Mr. Yun had changed his *nom de plume* from 'Arriso" (I know) to "Molio" (I don't know), and the

editorial began with the sentence: "Where is the editor of *The Independent?*" "Molio." The second sentence ran, "Where is there an honest official in all Korea?" and was signed again, "Molio." And then followed a scathing arraignment of the men who were suspected of being the chief movers of the plot the like of which for keenness of wit and biting sarcasm has rarely been seen in print.

The unexpected, referred to by the one high in authority who had been consulted in the matter of Mr. Yun's safety, actually did occur. The other nineteen victims of the plot were all arrested and thrown into prison, but no sooner did the news of the arrests spread abroad than the male portion of the city poured into the streets and a scene of wild disorder prevailed that baffled all the efforts of the police to quell. The crowd surged through the narrow streets, surrounded and soon demolished the residence of the Commissioner of Police. They further avowed that, unless the nineteen men were released, they would raze the house of every man concerned in the plot, and would not leave one stone of the great prison on another. A parley was had between the authorities and populace which finally resulted in the triumph of the mob and the release of the men.

Of course Sieu-Tsung had been one of the first objects of our solicitude. She was visited and entreated to come to a place of safety. This she quietly but firmly refused to do. She said: "Were I to leave the house, it would be plundered and destroyed. I shall hold our home for my husband." And she did. Prowlers came singly and in companies, but her

dauntless courage and calm dignity were equal to every occasion, and she held her post until conditions prevailed that made it safe to close the house and move her and the children to the residence of the elder Yun inside the city.

To recount in detail the thrilling events of that awful winter would require a volume; and, indeed, it would be impossible to describe the conditions of anarchy and riot that for four mortal months held the city in an agony of suspense and expectation. Tragedies and rumors of tragedies were flying thick and fast, and no one knew what moment would inaugurate a veritable reign of terror. The crowds on the streets persistently refused to disperse, and if they singly returned to their homes at night they were present again in the morning. Business was practically at a standstill, but merchants and wealthy sympathizers contributed large sums to feed the populace, and strings of country friends brought loads of fuel and provisions daily and dumped them on the streets. The large, open spaces in front of the palace and the great bell tower were always thronged, and almost daily strings of memorialists sent their petitions for reforms in to the king. The police and soldiery were of no avail; for were they not the brothers and sons of the men in white who composed the clamorous multitude? In the meantime the real head of the movement quietly bided his time in the seclusion of our mission compound. Three times a week his editorials came forth from the little American press and were eagerly seized and devoured by the multitude. At last the court became weary of the

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unequal contest, and a full and free pardon for all past offenses was sent to Mr. Yun with a request that he would at once repair to the palace.

Who shall reveal the secrets of that meeting when "the little foreign king," as he had been sneeringly dubbed, stood face to face with his old enemies? It is enough to say that after a long consultation Mr. Yun consented to see what he could do to disband the multitude that for more than four months had kept the country in a turmoil. He left the palace on his bicycle, followed by one crowd, and soon met by another. They seized him with mad shouts, bore him on their hands to the center of the square in front of the great bell tower, and stood him on a pile of boxes they had heaped together for a rostrum. An hour later the writer strolled down to the square and found Mr. Yun still speaking, though his voice was reduced to a hoarse whisper. He seemed, however, to make his audience understand by the aid of his flashing eyes and eloquent gestures.

The result of his address was a compromise that led to a face-to-face audience with the king. Three days later a thing hitherto unknown occurred. The throne chair was arranged under an open canopy in the wide space in front of the palace, and the king sat in the presence of his people. The diplomatic body and all foreigners in the city had been invited to be present. A line of guards kept the mighty mass of people about fifty yards away, and Mr. Yun and two other representatives of the people were allowed to approach immediately to the throne, and there, prostrate on their faces, they conversed with their sover-

eign. The king was very gentle and tender with them. He took up their grievances one by one, and for the most part promised the relief they asked for. Had all these promises been fulfilled, how different would have been the condition of Korea now! When Mr. Yun and his companions returned and reported the result of the conference, a mighty shout of joy rang forth, and the people quietly returned to their homes.

The influence of Mr. Yun had grown to be so powerful that it was felt at court that he must be removed from the capital. This object was accomplished by appointing him Governor of Wonsan, thus removing him to the opposite side of the peninsula, and practically out of touch with the element which had been his strong support in the efforts to inaugurate governmental reforms. After a year or two he was transferred to a similar position at Chi-nan-po, in the north, and then back again to Wonsan, where he remained until the troubles of the Russo-Japanese war made his services too valuable to be dispensed with at court, and he was recalled to the capital.

His wife accompanied him to the provinces, and contributed largely to the popularity of his administration. The last time the writer saw her was in 1901, on the road from Seoul to Wonsan. She was traveling with her husband and a large retinue of attendants, and was already five days out from Seoul. As we met, the chair in which she was being carried was set down by the wayside, and after a few words of salutation she threw up her hands and exclaimed: "O, I am so tired; talk to me in my mother tongue,

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Founder of the Korean Mission.

and rest me." And so we sat for an hour or more and talked in the old colloquial of Shanghai, so dear to us both; talked of the loved ones who had crossed the river, or the experiences passed, and hopes of the future, until the sparkle came back into the tired eyes and the old steady ring to the voice.

Her death, at Seoul, Korea, a few weeks ago, marks the passing of a life as full of those elements that make up a well-rounded Christian character as any this writer has known.

After seeing and hearing Lilavati Singh at the Ecumenical Missionary Conference in New York City, Ex-President Benjamin Harrison said: "If I had given a million dollars to foreign missions, I should count it wisely invested had it led only to the conversion of that one woman."

In like manner may not those to whom in the good providence of God it has fallen to foster and develop a woman like Mrs. T. H. Yun feel amply compensated for the toil and expense of a work that bears such fruit? She is only one of many, made prominent, it is true, by the peculiar circumstances of her life, but still a fitting illustration of the power there is in the touch of Christ to transform and ennoble the womanhood of heathen lands.

Oakland, Cal., June, 1905.